



## Rwanda

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The largely Tutsi Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) took power in 1994 and declared a government of National Unity that has functioned during the transition period following the civil war and genocide. The RPF remained the principal political force that controlled the government. President Paul Kagame was sworn in on April 22, 2000, in what was the first nonviolent presidential change in the country's history. While all political parties were represented within the Transitional National Assembly, it was influenced greatly by President Kagame and the RPF. Prime Minister Bernard Makuza, from the Democratic Republican Movement (MDR), ran the Government on a daily basis and was responsible for relations with the National Assembly. A new constitution was being written and national elections were scheduled for 2003. The judiciary was subject to presidential influence and suffered from a lack of resources, inefficiency, and some corruption.

The Minister of Defense was responsible for external security and national defense; the Minister of Internal Security was responsible for civilian security matters as well as supervision of the prisons and the national police. In October the Government announced a reorganization of the military establishment, providing for a smaller, heavier force more suitable for territorial defense than for expeditionary action abroad. The name of the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) has been changed to the Rwandan Defense Forces (RDF). The RDF and the police comprised the security apparatus. Government authorities did not always maintain effective control of the security forces, and there were several instances, particularly within the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), in which elements of the security forces acted independently of government authority. Volunteer armed civilian units serving as Local Defense Forces (LDF) with limited arrest powers also functioned throughout the country. In October, in accordance with an agreement with the DRC, government forces withdrew from DRC territory. Members of the security forces committed serious human rights abuses in the DRC; however, there were fewer reports of abuses committed within the country than in the previous year.

The country was very poor, and 60 percent of the population of 8.1 million lived in poverty. More than 90 percent of the labor force was engaged in subsistence agriculture. The 1994 genocide destroyed the country's social fabric, human resource base, institutional capacity, and economic and social infrastructure. Per capita annual income was \$230. Small-scale commercial activities increased, but the industrial base remained limited.

The Government's human rights record remained poor; although there were some improvements in a few areas, serious problems remained. The majority of human rights abuses committed by security forces were in the DRC. Citizens do not have the right to change their government. Unlike in the previous year, there were no reports of unlawful killings or disappearances within the country; however, there were credible reports that RDF units operating in the DRC committed deliberate unlawful killings and other serious abuses, and impunity remained a problem. Security forces beat suspects; however, unlike in the previous year, there were no reports that prisoners died of torture or abuse. Prison conditions remained life threatening, and prisoners died of disease and the cumulative effects of severe overcrowding. Arbitrary arrest and detention, and prolonged pretrial detention, remained serious problems. The judiciary was subject to executive influence and did not always ensure due process or expeditious trials. The Government continued to conduct genocide trials at a slow pace, and the first "Gacaca" courts began operation in July. The Government restricted freedom of speech and of the press and limited freedom of association and assembly. In some instances, local government officials restricted the freedom of religion. The Government forcibly repatriated some refugees to unsafe areas in the DRC, and harassed others who refused to leave voluntarily. Societal violence and discrimination against women and ethnic minorities were problems, and some street children were forced into an inadequate and unsafe detention center. Child labor persisted in the agricultural sector.

Unlike in the previous year, there were no reports of killings by insurgents tied to those responsible for the 1994

genocide.

## RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

### Section 1 Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom From:

#### a. Arbitrary or Unlawful Deprivation of Life

Unlike in the previous year, there were no reports that the RDF committed extrajudicial killings within the country, although RDF soldiers continued to resist incursions in the northwest and southwest by the Army for the Liberation of Rwanda (ALIR), a rebel Hutu group. Unlike in the previous year, there were no reports of civilian deaths as a result of this fighting. There also were no reports that some RDF forces summarily executed rebel soldiers.

In February 2001, in Kigali, a soldier in uniform killed RDF officer Alphonse Mbayire, a former military attache previously assigned to the Rwandan Embassy in Nairobi. The Government claimed the killing was the result of a personal dispute; however, there remained speculation of government involvement in the killing because of information Mbayire may have had concerning the 1999 murder of former Minister of Internal Affairs Seth Sendashonga in Nairobi. The Government reported that a warrant was out for the arrest of Private Manirakiza, a suspect in the killing.

Harsh prison conditions contributed to the deaths of an undetermined number of inmates during the year, mostly due to disease (see Section 1.c.).

Since the start of the current war in the DRC in 1998, RDF troops have participated on the side of the Congolese Rally for Democracy (RCD) rebel movement against the DRC Government. In 1999 all parties involved in the war in the DRC signed the Lusaka Agreement, which included a cease-fire; however, all parties, including RDF soldiers, repeatedly participated in battles after the declaration. Following the assassination of DRC President Laurent Kabila in January 2001, renewed efforts were made to end the war; however, periodic fighting since that time has resulted in credible allegations of human rights violations by all forces, including the RDF; however, no reliable statistics were available. All parties agreed to disengage their troops from the front lines and began doing so in 2001; the RDF pulled back to its agreed upon positions. In March 2001, a cease-fire began; however, fighting continued between the RDF/RCD and pro-DRC forces, primarily in the Kivu Provinces, DRC. In July in Pretoria, the Government and the DRC Government signed an agreement calling for the DRC to end its support for Rwandan rebels and for the RDF to withdraw from DRC territory. In September the Government began withdrawing troops and by October 5, all RDF forces had left the DRC, according to the U.N.-South African third-party verification mechanism.

There continued to be reports throughout the year of killings and other human rights abuses committed with impunity in the DRC by both pro-DRC and anti-DRC government forces, including, prior to October, the RDF. Verification of these reports was extremely difficult, particularly those originating from remote areas and those affected by active combat in the eastern part of the DRC. Independent observers often found access difficult due to hazardous conditions, as well as frequent bureaucratic impediments imposed by authorities. There were other reports of extrajudicial killings committed either by elements of the RCD, which the RDF materially supported and in some respects often directed, or in which direct involvement by RDF soldiers could not be clearly established by persons who found it difficult to distinguish between RCD and RDF forces. Some of these reports of RDF killings surfaced in Congolese media directly or indirectly controlled by the DRC Government; however, other such reports emerged from international religious or humanitarian organizations and were based on the accounts of multiple witnesses. The reported extrajudicial killings of civilians by RCD and Rwandan forces in the DRC often reportedly were committed in reprisal for guerrilla attacks on RCD or RDF forces. The Government has admitted that human rights abuses have occurred in territory under RDF/RCD control, but claimed that these were acts committed by individuals, not by the military as an institution.

There were numerous credible reports that RDF and RCD/Goma troops burned and destroyed entire villages in the DRC, frequently killing, torturing, or raping some of the inhabitants, especially in rural areas of North and South Kivu and northern Maniema Province. In May RCD-Goma troops killed more than 100 persons in retaliation for an attempted mutiny by RCD-Goma dissidents in Kisangani, DRC. The U.N. investigation did not find evidence of RDF involvement; however, there were numerous unconfirmed reports that RDF forces participated in these killings. Between January and July, RDF forces used excessive, indiscriminate violence against civilians, particularly the ethnic Tutsi Banyamulenge, to put down a popular revolt led by former RCD/G Commander Patrick Masunzu in the High Plateau region of South Kivu. There were numerous reports that RDF soldiers who arrived via the ground route burned, destroyed, and pillaged numerous small non-Banyamulenge villages on their way up to

the High Plateau. On the High Plateau, the RDF forcibly displaced as many as 30,000 Banyamulenge civilians and burned down more than 90 Banyamulenge villages. RDF troops also reportedly killed, abducted, and raped an undetermined number of Banyamulenge civilians. At various periods, particularly from June 18 until July, the RDF repeatedly used helicopters to attack the High Plateau region, including areas populated by civilians. The RDF repeatedly denied access to all international humanitarian organizations, making it difficult to determine the number of civilians killed, injured, raped, tortured, and displaced. The Government has not opened any inquiries into the abuses by its troops.

The Government continued to assert that the casualties of the December 2001 fighting between Mai Mai and RDF and RCD/Goma forces were the result of a Mai Mai attack, rather than an RDF and RCD/Goma-staged battle to discourage the deployment to the area of a U.N. Peace Observation Mission in Congo (MONUC). The Government has taken no action against any RPA soldier in connection with this incident.

There were reports that landmines continued to be used, particularly in the eastern half of the DRC, despite agreement not to do so in the Lusaka Accords. However, it was impossible to know which groups laid landmines.

Unexploded ordinances that remained from the 1994 civil war caused deaths during the year. For example, on June 4, a boy was killed and several others were injured after the boy accidentally detonated a grenade.

The Government provided to human rights organizations, and even other governments, systematic replies and rebuttals to allegations of human rights abuses. It also arrested alleged offenders from the security services. According to the Government, soldiers continued to be arrested and detained on charges of murder, manslaughter, or armed robbery in the DRC prior to the October withdrawal. Others were arrested on charges of offenses committed in the country. The Ministry of Defense also has prosecuted alleged offenders during the year in military trials. Despite these arrests and trials, impunity remained a problem.

During the year, RDF Captain Peter Kabanda and other RDF soldiers were tried and acquitted of charges of killing 67 unarmed civilians in Masisi, North Kivu Province in 2000.

In June RDF Captain Alex Rugira, Lieutenant Stephan Gapfunsi, S/Major Canisius Rutabana, Private Alphonse Tuyisenge, and Private Joseph Rugirangira were tried by military court for the 2000 killings of Baligizu Mufungizi and other civilians near Burhinyi, South Kivu, in the DRC. Captain Rugira and Lieutenant Gapfunsi were acquitted, while S/Major Rutabana and Privates Tuyisenge and Rugirangira each were sentenced to 1 year's imprisonment.

The investigation into the 2000 killing of Assiel Kabera, an advisor to former President Pasteur Bizimungu, by three men in military uniform, still was ongoing at year's end. The Government denied any involvement in the killing.

No action has been taken against the RDF officers responsible for human rights violations in 2000 during fighting with Ugandan troops in Kisangani. The fighting resulted in hundreds of civilian deaths, more than 1,700 persons injured, and 60,000 displaced persons. The Government denied that Rwandan troops committed any human rights violations in Kisangani and claimed that civilian casualties occurred inadvertently while the RDF was defending itself from an unprovoked attack.

Action was taken in some of the 2000 cases involving rape and killing by members of the RDF; however, most of the responsible parties were neither arrested nor prosecuted.

The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), based in Arusha, Tanzania, continued to prosecute genocide suspects (see Section 4). Seven trials were in progress at year's end: The media case against Jean-Bosco Barayagwiza, Ferdinand Nahimana, and Hassan Ngeze; the Butare case against former Minister of Family and Women's Affairs Pauline Nyiramasuhuko, Arsene Shalom Ntahobali, Alphonse Nteziryayo, Sylvain Nsabimana, Elie Ndayambaje, and Joseph Kanyabashi; the Cyanguu case against Emmanuel Bagambiki, Samuel Imanishimwe, and Andre Ntagerura; the Juvenal Kajelijeli case; the Jean de Dieu Kamuhanda case, the Eliezer Niyitegeka case; and the military case against Theoneste Bagasora, Gratien Kabiligi, Aloys Ntabakuze, and Anatole Nsengiyumva. The trials in the Laurent Semanza case and the Kibuye case against Elizaphan Ntakirutimana and Gerard Ntakirutimana were completed, but verdicts have not yet been handed down. Major Francois-Xavier Nzuwonemey, former Reconnaissance Battalion Commander; Lt. Colonel Tharcisse Muvunyi; Bernard Ntyuhag; and Capt. Innocent Sagahutu remained in detention. Two of the three ICTR investigators arrested in 2001 on genocide charges were in custody awaiting trial at year's end; the remaining investigator had been released from custody, but was fired by the ICTR.

There were no developments in the investigation into the December 2001 shooting death of Gratien Munyarubuga,

a taxi driver and member of the outlawed Party for Democracy and Renewal (PDR), who was killed by two of his passengers. The Government denied that the killing was politically motivated. There were no reports of any action taken against local defense unit members responsible for killing civilians in 2000.

Unlike in the previous year, there were no reports that rebel forces killed civilians in the country.

#### b. Disappearance

Unlike in the previous year, there were no reports of politically motivated disappearances within the country; however, there were numerous credible reports that RDF forces in the DRC seized and transferred to the country numerous Banyamulenge prisoners following the revolt of Banyamulenge Commander Masunzu against the RDF in late January. Several hundred RCD/Goma soldiers in the DRC suspected of sympathizing with the revolt reportedly were disarmed and sent to the country in May for forced "retraining." There was no further information on the soldiers; many suspected they were killed or remained in secret detention in military camps or prisons. The Government denied that any abductions occurred.

In April and May, there were reports that the RDF arrested Banyamulenge soldiers, including 9 senior commanders who refused to fight against Masunzu and his followers and sent them to Kamembe military camp in Cyangugu prefecture. The soldiers remained missing at year's end. Government officials denied that any such arrests had occurred.

There continued to be reports that until their withdrawal in October, RDF troops abducted women and children from villages they raided to perform labor, military services, and sexual services, although it was unlikely that such abductions were sanctioned by the Rwandan Government. Many of the victims disappeared and have not been heard from since.

Theobald Rwaka Gakwaya, a former Interior Minister and founder of the Rwandan League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights (LIPRODHOR) who disappeared in 2001, remained in self-imposed exile abroad.

There were no developments in the 2001 disappearances of Jean de Dieu Dufatanye or the 2000 disappearance of Ainakafota and Alexis Ruzindara.

#### c. Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

The fundamental law prohibits torture; however, beatings at the time of arrest were common. There continued to be reports that RDF troops abused civilians in the DRC. Unlike in the previous year, detainees did not report torture.

There continued to be numerous reports that government security forces harassed and threatened political dissidents, journalists, and NGOs (see Sections 2.b. and 4); however, unlike in the previous year, there were no reports that police prevented the meetings of some NGOs.

No action was taken against responsible security forces in the 2001 case of the Congolese art dealer who was arrested and tortured at Military Intelligence Headquarters. The Government maintained that it was unaware of the incident.

No action was taken against those responsible for attacking former President Bizimungu in August 2001.

No action was taken against the three soldiers who harassed and beat the wife of Vales Kwitegetse, a journalist with the government-controlled newspaper Imvaho, in 2000. The Government reported that it had investigated the report and determined that it was false.

The RDF continued to dismiss soldiers for indiscipline and criminal offenses. The RDF routinely tried military offenders in military courts, which handed down sentences of fines, imprisonment, or both during the year.

Unexploded ordinances that remained from the 1994 civil war caused injuries during the year (see Section 1.a.).

During the year, there were numerous, credible reports from local and international human rights groups that RDF

forces and their RCD allies engaged in the beating and torture of civilians in the DRC, particularly in the High Plateau region (see Section 1.a.). There also were numerous reports that RDF forces and their RCD allies raped women and girls. For example, from January to March, RPA and RCD-Goma soldiers reportedly frequently raped young girls in rural schools throughout the territory of Fizi in South Kivu.

RDF and RCD/Goma forces reportedly imprisoned individuals in a small metal freight container at Ndoshu, outside Goma, the DRC, in conditions that were cruel, inhuman, and degrading. According to Amnesty International, Zelote Farini Leundo Shandwe and Elias Nguru have been held in this container without communication with family members or NGOs since August. Two prior detainees at Ndoshu reportedly disappeared; one was believed to have been executed and the other sent to a detention center in the country.

No action has been taken against RDF soldiers responsible for human rights violations in Kisangani during fighting with Ugandan troops in 2001, and the Government continued to deny that such events occurred (see Section 1.a.). No action was taken during the year against RDF soldiers involved in the following 2000 cases in the DRC: The rapes of numerous women in Kisangani in May and June; and the February killings and rapes of 30 persons in Kilambo, North Kivu Province.

Prison conditions were harsh and life threatening. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has registered approximately 103,000 prisoners detained on genocide or security-related charges and estimated that an additional 8,000 prisoners were detained on charges unrelated to the genocide; however, the Ministry of Justice routinely referred to the prison population as numbering 130,000. While the Government was committed to improving prison conditions, chronic overcrowding remained a major problem. Sanitary conditions were extremely poor, and despite continuing efforts, the Government did not provide adequate food or medical treatment. The ICRC provided 50 percent of the food in the 19 main prisons and also provided additional expertise and medical, logistical, and material support to improve conditions for inmates. Prison deaths largely were the result of preventable diseases, suspected HIV/AIDS, or the cumulative effects of severe overcrowding. There were an undetermined number of deaths in prison reported during the year.

Women were detained separately from men, and more than 4,500 minors between the ages of 14 and 18 years were incarcerated with adults throughout the prison system. Children under 14 were not legally responsible for their acts, and this led to the release of many children and youths from prison, although the National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) reported that 108 infants and at least 15 children were incarcerated with their mothers. Pretrial detainees generally were separated from convicted prisoners; however, there were numerous exceptions as a result of the large number of genocide detainees awaiting trial. Prisoners may also be hired out to perform work at private residences and business.

The ICRC, human rights organizations, diplomats, and journalists had regular access to the prisons. The ICRC continued its visits to communal jails and military-supervised jails.

Reports persisted that RCD/Goma and RDF forces used the private residences of Rwandan or rebel military commanders for incarcerations. Reports from former detainees indicated a pattern of beatings, undernourishment, and deliberate killings in these houses.

#### d. Arbitrary Arrest, Detention, or Exile

The fundamental law provides legal safeguards against arbitrary arrest and detention; however, authorities rarely observed them in practice, and security forces continued to arrest and detain persons arbitrarily. The justice system collapsed during the war and genocide of 1994. With help from the international community, it was being rebuilt slowly and was beginning to function more normally. The Government did not have the capacity to ensure that provisions in the Constitution were enforced or that due process protections were observed.

In general the law requires that authorities investigate, then obtain a judicial warrant before arresting a suspect. The police may detain persons for up to 48 hours without a warrant; formal charges must be brought within 5 days of arrest. These provisions were disregarded widely. The law permits investigative detention if authorities believe that public safety is threatened or that the accused might flee. There is no bail, but the authorities may release a suspect pending trial if they are satisfied that there is no risk that the person may flee or become a threat to public safety and order.

Police arrested members of NGOs during the year (see Section 4).

In April security forces arrested former President Bizimungu and former minister Charles Ntakirutinka and charged

them with making divisive statements against the Government, forming and recruiting for an illegal organization, supporting armed groups against the Government, embezzlement of public funds, circulating false documents, and possession of an illegal firearm. Police subsequently arrested approximately 30 other persons believed to be involved with Bizimungu's banned PDR -Ubuyanja party. On July 12, Bizimungu, Ntakarutinka, and others who were arrested in connection with them appeared before the Supreme Court and appealed their detention; on July 30, the Court rejected their appeal. On October 14, the group appeared before the Nyamirambo Court of First Instance to appeal their charges of "threatening national security by forming a criminal association." Their appeal was referred to the Court of Appeals for determination. Many of those arrested eventually were released; however, Bizimungu, Ntakarutinka, and several others remained in custody awaiting trial at year's end.

The Government continued to detain members of ALIR who returned to the country, either after being captured following armed incursions or voluntarily turning themselves over to government authorities; detainees were placed in a reintegration program. Ex-combatants also returned to the country as part of the ongoing peace process between Rwanda and the DRC. These returnees included some children. The children generally were serving as porters for the ALIR units; few were serving as combatants. Child soldiers were separated from the adult combatants. Human rights groups reported that the detainees were treated humanely. Detainees at the reeducation camp at Mutobo frequently received visitors and sometimes were allowed to go home for visits.

An estimated 95 percent of the approximately 111,000 individuals presently incarcerated were awaiting trial on genocide charges. The law permitted the continued detention of genocide suspects long enough to allow them to face trial either in a conventional court or in the Gacaca system (see Section 1.e.). Lengthy pretrial detention was a serious problem. Some suspects have been in jail since 1994. The Government does not have the capacity to process cases within a reasonable time frame. Mobile groups, whose mandate was to establish or complete files that indicated the basis for charges for all detainees, continued to operate during the year. Approximately 90 percent of prisoners in custody during the year have files; however, the vast majority of those files were incomplete. The Government continued to release prisoners who were elderly, ill, without files, or with incomplete files. Rearrests because of community criticism were rare.

There were no developments in the case of Jean Mbanda, who was arrested in 2000 allegedly for fraud and embezzlement. Mbanda, who remained in detention, widely was regarded as a political detainee who actually was being punished for his political views.

The Government did not use forced exile; however, some individuals secretly left the country to live in self-imposed exile because they believed their lives were in danger (see Section 1.b.). Unlike in the previous year, the Government did not try anyone in absentia.

#### e. Denial of Fair Public Trial

The fundamental law provides for an independent judiciary; however, the Government did not always respect this provision in practice. The judiciary was subject to executive influence and also suffered from inefficiency, a lack of resources, and some corruption. Security forces at times ignored court decisions and have refused to release prisoners. There were occasional reports of bribery of officials ranging from clerks to judges. The 12-member Anti-Corruption Commission charged with fighting corruption in the judiciary continued to make progress. It was chaired by the Minister of Justice and charged with investigating all activities involving corruption and educating citizens on methods that can be used to fight corruption. In April Commission action resulted in the resignation of 6 Supreme Court and 4 First Instance Court judges over charges of corruption, the dismissal of 8 district court judges, and the transfer of 32 district court judges, mainly in Gisenyi Province.

The fundamental law provides for a system of communal courts, appeals courts, and a Supreme Court of six justices. The President nominates two candidates for each Supreme Court seat, and the National Assembly may choose one or reject both; however, the latter was not known to ever have happened.

The law provides for public trials with the right to a defense, but not at public expense. The shortage of lawyers and the abject poverty of most defendants made it difficult for many defendants to obtain legal representation. Unlike in the previous year, Avocats Sans Frontieres redirected its efforts to training Gacaca judges and did not provide defense or counsel those in need. New court officers continued to be sworn in and assigned to courts across the country, but the Government did not have sufficient prosecutors, judges, or courtrooms to hold trials within a reasonable time.

Unlike in the previous year, there were no reports that the Government tried and convicted persons in absentia.

The judiciary was focused on resolving the enormous genocide caseload of more than 100,000 detainees (see Section 1.d.). The Government continued with the program referred to as the Gisovu, or pre-Gacaca, project, a release program in which detainees and prisoners who were elderly, ill, or without files were taken to their former villages to allow villagers to make complaints against them or to confirm that there was no reason to detain them. Local human rights organizations estimated that less than 10 percent of accused persons undergoing this process during the year were released. Rearrests because of community criticism were rare.

Gacaca courts, a grassroots participatory form of justice, were scheduled to serve as the Government's primary judicial process for adjudicating genocide cases. The sixth chamber of the Supreme Court and its President, Aloysie Cyanzayire, oversaw the implementation of Gacaca. These courts, which combined participatory justice and reconciliation techniques exercised at the local level, began pilot operations in designated cells during the year. The Gacaca law provides for reduced sentences for cooperation and credit for time served; lawyers were not permitted to participate officially in Gacaca.

Genocide-related cases were tried in the ICTR (see Section 4) and by the Government in local courts. By year's end, approximately 7,331 persons had been judged on genocide-related charges, most following group trials. Of the 877 cases judged this year, 33 resulted in death sentences, 186 in life imprisonment, 381 in sentences less than life, 237 in acquittals, and 40 were fined for property crimes. The vast majority of trials met international standards. LIPRODHOR also actively monitored trials and interviewed released prisoners. No executions have been carried out since 1998.

A section of the Organic Genocide Law is designed to encourage confessions in exchange for reduced sentences for the vast majority of those involved in the genocide. As a result of efforts by the Government, international donors, and NGOs to advertise widely the confession provisions, 33,000 prisoners have confessed since the law was implemented in 1996. However, only a small number of confessions were processed due to lengthy administrative review and hearing proceedings and the lack of officials to process the confessions through the system.

There were no reports of political prisoners.

#### f. Arbitrary Interference with Privacy, Family, Home or Correspondence

The Constitution prohibits such practices, and authorities generally respected these prohibitions; however, on April 19, police forcibly entered the home of former President Bizimungu, searched the home of former Minister Ntakirutinka, and confiscated a computer and files belonging to Ntakirutinka. Both Bizimungu and Ntakirutinka, who were charged with spreading divisive ideas, subsequently were arrested and remained in detention awaiting trial at year's end.

Since 1997 more than 600,000 persons in the countryside have been relocated to government-designated resettlement sites in compliance with a "villagization" policy. Although the Government claimed that the move to villages was voluntary, some observers believe that many persons were compelled to move by government authorities; others may have relocated out of fear of government security forces or insurgents. Human Rights Watch reported that many of these individuals were forced to move against their will to substandard housing, often with little access to basic amenities such as water. The Government denied that coercion occurred, but admitted it has encountered problems in the implementation of the program. While villagization remained government policy, the Government no longer compelled these persons to remain in the villages; however, restrictions on where houses could be built forced some to remain. Thousands of persons still lived in inadequate housing not of their own choosing.

The RDF has practiced forced conscription, particularly after the country entered the conflict in the DRC. Citizens who served in the military could be recalled to compulsory duty at any time.

Unlike in the previous year, there were no reports that the Government pressured prominent members of the PDR to leave the party and renounce it publicly.

Police harassed and intimidated family members of former President Bizimungu during the year. During April several individuals suspected of association with Bizimungu's banned political party PDR-Ubuyanja were arrested for privately expressing support for ex-President Pasteur Bizimungu (see Section 1.d.).

Section 2 Respect for Civil Liberties, Including:

#### a. Freedom of Speech and Press

The fundamental law provides for freedom of speech and of the press; however, the Government restricted these rights in practice, and the Government harassed journalists whose views were contrary to official views. Most journalists practiced self-censorship due to fear of government reprisals.

Authorities arrested several individuals after they expressed viewpoints unacceptable to the Government (see Section 1.d.).

Media sources were limited. There were several privately owned newspapers, which publish weekly in English, French, or Kinyarwanda. There was no daily newspaper.

In January Pierre Gakwandi, Secretary General of the Democratic Republican Movement, was arrested on charges related to an interview that appeared in the newspaper *Le Partisan*. His trial was scheduled for March of 2003.

In May authorities arrested Ismail Mbonigaba, chief editor of the newspaper *Umuseso*, for publishing an article that was disrespectful of the President. *Umuseso* was detained for less than a week, and his passport was confiscated for another 2 weeks.

On May 17, the Government arrested and subsequently deported Rwanda Herald Chief Editor Asuman Bisiika. The Herald had been critical of the Government on several occasions prior to Bisiika's arrest.

On July 19, Kigali security forces arrested three *Umuseso* reporters, who were believed to have observed unprofessional conduct by police responding to an altercation at a local bar. The reporters were charged with assaulting police officers and were arrested and released; however, all three were required to remain in their districts of residence and to appear monthly in court. These restrictions were lifted within a few months.

No action was taken against those responsible for harassing a journalist working for Voice of America (VOA) in May 2001.

Journalist Vales Kwitegetse remained outside the country at year's end.

The President refused to sign a law passed by the National Assembly in 2001 that provided for a maximum sentence of death and a minimum sentence of 20 years imprisonment for journalists who were convicted of using the mass media to incite the population to commit genocide.

In November a new press law was passed that authorized private radio and TV broadcasting, subject to the approval of the Government. The Government owned the only national radio station and the only television station, which in principle nominally were independent of the Government. The television station broadcast 10 hours per day. The government-controlled radio station, Radio Rwanda, had a wide audience and each Sunday broadcast a call-in program, which discussed and debated controversial subjects; Radio Rwanda journalists were civil servants of the National Office of Information. The British Broadcasting Corporation broadcast on FM from Kigali in several languages. The German broadcasting service *Deutsche Welle* also broadcast from Kigali, as did the VOA.

Unlike in the previous year, no broadcast journalists were fired for criticizing the Government.

The government-owned telecommunication company, the government-supported Kigali Institute of Technology, and the National University of Rwanda provided Internet service along with the privately owned Media Post. In 2001 several licenses were granted to private companies that planned to provide Internet services in the future.

The Government did not restrict academic freedom.

#### b. Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association

The fundamental law provides for freedom of assembly; however, authorities limited this right in practice. They legally may require advance notice for outdoor rallies, demonstrations, and meetings. Authorities generally prohibited nighttime meetings, although they have relaxed this restriction for religious groups. Unlike in the previous year, authorities did not prevent any meetings of human rights NGOs, press conferences, or meetings held in private homes. However, prior to former President Bizimungu's arrest in April, government authorities



restricted his contacts with political figures and the press, and forbade him from attending public church services.

RDF soldiers forcibly dispersed demonstrations in the DRC (see Section 2.c.).

The Constitution provides for freedom of association; however, the Government limited this right in practice. Private organizations were required to register but, with few exceptions, the Government generally granted licenses without undue delay. All unions must register with the Government. In 2001 the Government also passed a new law making registration of NGOs more difficult and giving the Government more influence over the staff, budget, and committee membership of NGOs (see Section 2.c.).

Individuals suspected of association with former President Bizimungu's banned political party PDR-Ubuyanja were subject to arrest in April (see Section 1.d.).

#### c. Freedom of Religion

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion; however, while the Government generally respected this right in practice, it imposed some restrictions.

In 2001 the Government promulgated a law that increases government influence over NGOs and requires all nonprofit organizations, including churches and religious organizations, to register with the Ministry of Justice to acquire the status of "legal entity." All religious groups reportedly met the April 1 deadline for filing registration applications, and many groups were granted status as legal entities by year's end. Other groups experienced delays because of government security procedures, such as criminal background checks of group leaders, or because they were unable to provide required documentation, such as asset statements, financial reports, and constitutions. Ministry of Justice officials worked to resolve these issues with representatives of the religious groups. At year's end, no application had been denied, and no group's religious activities had been curtailed as a result of difficulties or delays in the registration process.

In February government authorities forbade former President Bizimungu from attending public church services; authorities charged that Bizimungu's presence would be "divisive."

In April the Prefect of Kibungo Province attempted to reimpose restrictions on the rights of members of Jehovah's Witnesses to assemble and worship and announced a ban on the construction of "Kingdom Halls," the group's places of worship. The restrictions subsequently were lifted after the group petitioned the national Government; however, in July the Prefect of Kibungo again announced restrictions on the Jehovah's Witnesses' right of assembly and worship. These restrictions had not been imposed by year's end.

During April and May, local officials detained members of Jehovah's Witnesses, primarily for refusing to participate in nightly security patrols. Delegations of Jehovah's Witnesses who intervened with local or national authorities generally were able to secure the release of those arrested, who typically were detained from 2 days to 2 weeks; however, two persons remained in detention at year's end. Local school authorities also suspended students for refusing to salute the flag or to sing the national anthem.

The Government continued to watch closely for the development of cult churches after the doomsday cult deaths in Uganda in 2000. Approximately 12 members of the Mouvement Sacerdotal Marial, which authorities charged was an "unhealthy and antisocial cult" with ties to the cult in Uganda, remained in detention at year's end.

Prior to the Rwandan withdrawal from the DRC in October, reports continued to surface that RDF troops joined RCD rebels in targeting Catholic clergy for abuse. Abuses reportedly took the form of arbitrary killings, arrests, and disappearances of pastors, priests, and laypersons; public threats against the lives of religious leaders; pillaging and destruction of church property; and the use of armed soldiers to disperse forcibly religious services. For example, on April 12, in Bukavu, DRC, RDF and RCD-Goma soldiers surrounded the congregations of several Catholic churches and forcibly dispersed and beat parishioners.

For a more detailed discussion see the 2002 International Religious Freedom Report.

#### d. Freedom of Movement within the Country, Foreign Travel, Emigration, and Repatriation

The Constitution provides for these rights; however, the Government at times did not respect them in practice. Citizens must show identification when requested. Citizens must obtain a new national identity card when making a

permanent move to a new district, and these new cards were issued routinely.

In May government authorities confiscated the passport of Umuseso chief editor Ismail Mbonigaba and prevented his travel to Bujumbura for a meeting. The passport was returned after 2 weeks (see Section 2.a.).

The law does not provide for the granting of asylum or refugee status in accordance with the 1951 U.N. Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. The Constitution recognizes the right to asylum "under conditions determined by law;" however, there is no law in place to recognize refugees. The Government cooperated with the office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and provided first asylum to approximately 31,500 persons. The vast majority were Congolese refugees who fled their country during the unrest of 1996. There were reports of the forced return of persons to a country where they feared persecution. From August to October, the Government repatriated between approximately 10,000 refugees to the DRC. While many left the country voluntarily, many others were forcibly repatriated to inadequate camps and to unsafe areas within the DRC. Since October more than 3,500 of such refugees returned to the refugee camps in the country to escape the harsh conditions in the DRC. Even after authorities discontinued the forced repatriations, the Government continued to harass those who chose to stay and drastically reduced services to the camps.

By year's end, more than 45,000 Rwandan refugees remained in the DRC, Uganda, Burundi, Malawi, Zambia, Angola, Republic of the Congo, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Togo, and Benin; however, many refugees have returned to the country. According to the UNHCR, 13,837 Rwandan citizens returned to the country from the DRC during the first 9 months of the year. Another 24,000 Rwandan refugees were voluntarily repatriated from Tanzania. The Government made a concerted effort during the year to encourage repatriation of Rwandan refugees throughout the region, particularly in Tanzania. Several thousand Rwandan refugees in Tanzania, fearing forced return, fled to camps in Uganda and Malawi during the year.

More than 750 Hutu former combatants and accompanying family members were repatriated to the country as part of an effort to demobilize, repatriate, and reintegrate Rwandan rebels in the DRC.

There were approximately 31,500 refugees in Rwanda, including 28,250 from the DRC, 500 from Burundi, and 2,750 from other countries.

### Section 3 Respect for Political Rights: The Right of Citizens to Change Their Government

Citizens do not have the right to change their government by democratic means. The RPF was the dominant political force in the country. Following the genocide of 1994, political parties agreed to form a government of national unity based on the 1992-93 Arusha Accords. This agreement laid the basis for the apportionment of ministries and other offices. The RPF brought representatives of four opposition parties into the Government after its military victory in 1994, but none of the officials was elected.

Political parties agreed to suspend political activities for a period of 5 years, during which time the transition to elected government was to have been completed. This 5-year period was scheduled to end in 1999; however, the Government announced in June 1999 the extension of the transition period by 4 additional years. The announcement did not mention political party activities, but the parties continued to observe the suspension. Some political parties alleged that the RDF actively promoted itself regionally and at the sector levels, while prohibiting other political parties from doing the same. While there was no law specifically preventing the formation of political parties, in 2001 the Government prevented former President Bizimungu from forming the PDR-Ubuyanja party. Members of the party were arrested, and several, including Bizimungu, remained in custody at year's end (see Sections 1.d. and 2.b.).

A National Assembly was functioning, with nine political entities represented, including the RDF. The political bureaus or executive committees of their respective parties chose assembly members, known as deputies. The "Political Forum," an informal grouping of senior members of each of the political parties represented in the National Assembly, has dismissed deputies for misconduct, alleged corruption, or incompetence. The parliamentary commissions of inquiry investigated allegations of corruption and other alleged misdeeds of ministers and deputies. Some of these inquiries have resulted in the sanctioning and resignation of ministers.

In March 2001, the country held its first secret-ballot elections to elect council members at the district level; more than 90 percent of eligible voters participated in what international observers deemed to be generally free and fair elections. However, a March report by Human Rights Watch indicated that in 45 percent of the contests only 1 candidate ran for office, some potential candidates withdrew after being threatened, and some voters cast their ballots out of fear of reprisal. This fear was based on historical experience; however, there were no reports of reprisals following the March elections. Political parties did not participate in this election. The central Government

continued to appoint officials at the regional and national levels.

The National Unity and Reconciliation Commission, charged with educating the public on such issues as ethnic understanding, peace building, history, and civics, was active. In November the Legal and Constitutional Commission completed a draft constitution, which was being modified at year's end. Once completed, the constitution will be presented to the Presidential cabinet and submitted to the National Assembly for debate. A constitutional referendum was scheduled for May 2003.

There were no laws that restrict the participation of women in the political process. Women held 5 of the 26 ministerial positions in the Government and 16 of the 74 seats in the National Assembly.

There were no laws that restricted the participation of minorities in government and politics (see Section 5).

#### Section 4 Governmental Attitude Regarding International and Nongovernmental Investigation of Alleged Violations of Human Rights

A variety of domestic and international human rights groups operated in the country, investigating and publishing their findings, but none of the domestic organizations had the resources to conduct extensive human rights monitoring. In 2001 the Government passed a law making registration of NGOs more difficult and giving the Government more influence over the staff, budget, and committee membership of NGOs.

Local NGO activities often were limited to receiving and compiling reports from citizens about human rights abuses and conducting selected investigations. Reports were published occasionally; statements criticizing specific incidents are more common. Only one or two local human rights NGOs were viewed as strictly impartial. Unlike in the previous year, the Government did not threaten LIPRODHOR. There also were no reports of the forcible dispersal or prevention of NGO meetings during the year.

In January police in Butare arrested three members of a local NGO for publishing a newsletter calling for national reconciliation; authorities charged that the newsletter was an incitement to hatred. One of the persons arrested was released within hours of the arrest; the other two were detained for 1 month, after which they were released when a court determined that the charges were unsubstantiated. All three persons remained under government surveillance, and the NGO was not allowed to operate.

The Government criticized the reports by some international human rights NGOs and was particularly hostile towards those whose reporting was perceived as biased and inaccurate. The Government provided to human rights organizations, and even other governments, systematic replies and rebuttals to allegations of human rights abuses. The ICRC operated normally and was active in visiting prisons.

On December 9, the Government declared persona non grata the deputy head of the local UNHCR office, who had criticized the Government's refugee policy.

The ICTR continued to prosecute genocide suspects during the year, but at a slow pace. No verdicts were handed down this year although two trials were completed and were awaiting verdicts. Since 1994 the ICTR has delivered verdicts on only nine persons. Credible reports indicated that the ICTR continued to face serious problems, including poor management, incompetence, and corruption. The authorities sporadically prevented witnesses from attending and giving testimony at the ICTR, which delayed the judicial process. Relations and cooperation between the Government and the ICTR worsened considerably over the year, particularly after it became known that the Tribunal was investigating RDF crimes committed in 1994. In June survivor's organizations suspended cooperation and advised their members not to testify in Arusha. These actions were due to perceived mistreatment of witnesses and continuing reports that the ICTR tolerated the presence of suspected genocidaires within some of the defense teams.

The Governments of Mali, Benin, and Swaziland have agreements with the ICTR to accept convicted prisoners. Six convicted genocidaires were serving their sentences in Mali: former Prime Minister Jean Kambanda, Jean Paul Akayesu, Alfred Musema, and Clement Kayishema, all of whom were sentenced to life in prison; Obed Ruzindana, who was sentenced to 25 years; and Omar Serushago, who was sentenced to 15 years. The Government of Italy has agreed to house Georges Riuggiu, the only non-Rwandan in ICTR custody; however, the agreement was not implemented by year's end.

The NCHR hosted several human rights seminars and training sessions during the year. The Government generally allowed the Commission to operate independently and without undue influence. The NCHR intervened on behalf of several prisoners over the year.

## Section 5 Discrimination Based on Race, Sex, Disability, Language, or Social Status

The Constitution provides that all citizens are equal before the law, without discrimination on the basis of race, color, origin, ethnicity, clan, sex, opinion, religion, or social standing and the Government generally enforced these provisions; however, problems remained.

### Women

Domestic violence against women was common. Wife beating and domestic violence occurred frequently. Cases normally were handled within the context of the extended family and rarely came before the courts. When the Government did become involved, such as in cases involving serious injury, the courts took such incidents seriously. Numerous suspects have been tried and convicted for crimes of violence against women and girls. During the year, numerous rape trials resulted in convictions with the maximum sentences for perpetrators. Prosecutions for rape continued during the year; those convicted generally received sentences of from 20 to 30 years' imprisonment.

Women continued to face societal discrimination. Women traditionally performed most of the subsistence farming. Since the 1994 genocide, which left numerous women as heads of households, women have assumed a larger role in the modern sector, and many run their own businesses. Nevertheless, women continued to have limited opportunities for education, employment, and promotion. Government efforts to expand opportunities for women included the sponsorship of scholarships for girls in primary and secondary school, the provision of loans to rural women, and a Ministry of Gender program to train government officials and NGOs in methods to increase the role of women in the workforce. The 1992 Family Code generally improved the legal position of women in matters relating to marriage, divorce, and child custody. The law allows women to inherit property from their fathers and husbands and allows couples to choose the legal property arrangements they wish to adopt.

The Ministry of Gender and Women in Development was charged with handling problems of particular concern to women. The Minister was an active advocate of women's rights. A number of women's groups were extremely active in promoting women's concerns, particularly those faced by widows, orphaned girls, and households headed by children.

### Children

The Government was committed to children's rights and welfare, and it attempted to provide education and health care to every child. Children headed at least 85,000 households. The Government worked closely with international NGOs to secure assistance for children who were heads of households, and sensitized local officials to the needs of children in such situations. More than 98 percent of the children who were separated from or lost their parents during the 1994 genocide and subsequent repatriations have been reunited with family members or placed in foster homes. Approximately 30,000 children live abroad, and the Government claims most were taken without the consent of their parents during the genocide. Many of the children abroad have been adopted. The Government did not reiterate its request during the year that the 41 children adopted in Italy be repatriated.

All families must pay school fees to enroll a child; however, school fees routinely are waived for orphans. Public schools lacked essential and basic supplies and could not accommodate all children of primary school age. A UNICEF study reported that 400,000 school-age children were unable to go to school in 1999. Private schools often were too distant or too expensive to serve as an alternative for many children. Entry to secondary school was by examination. According to a 1996 study conducted by the Government and the U.N. Population Fund, 59.6 percent of the population age 6 and over had primary education, but only 48 percent of the population as a whole was literate; 52 percent of men were literate compared to 45 percent of women. Only 3.9 percent of citizens had completed secondary school, and only 0.2 percent had a university education.

Although the Penal Code prohibits the imprisonment of children with adults, the NCHR reported that at least 15 children, and 108 infants, were incarcerated with their mothers (see Section 1.c.). In 1999 the ICRC reported that approximately 570 children who were under the age of 14 at the time of their arrests were incarcerated on genocide-related charges. Although the Government was making efforts to release them, an undetermined number of children under the age of 14 still were incarcerated on genocide-related charges at year's end.

There were approximately 7,000 street children in the country, according to UNICEF. During the year, local authorities continued to periodically round up street children and place them in foster homes. Many children also have forcibly been placed in the Center run by the Ministry of Local Government at Gitagata. The Center, which has a capacity of 400 to 500, has held up to 1,000 children. Police and local defense forces provided security;

however, escapes occurred regularly, and an adolescent reportedly was shot in the leg while trying to escape. The children were not effectively segregated by age or by gender, and many were at risk of physical and sexual abuse. The 20 to 25 girls in the camp especially were vulnerable, and there were reports of sexual abuse by peers, Center staff, and security forces. The Government was working with local NGOs at year's end to provide an alternative program for street children.

Unlike in the previous year, there were no reports that some street children joined the RDF to perform nonmilitary duties.

Until the RDF withdrawal from the DRC in October, there continued to be reports that Rwandan and RCD rebel troops abducted young women from the villages they raided.

#### Persons with Disabilities

Although there are no laws restricting persons with disabilities from employment, education, or other state services, in practice few persons with disabilities had access to education or employment. There is no law mandating access to public facilities.

#### National/Racial/Ethnic Minorities

Before April 1994, an estimated 85 percent of citizens were Hutu, 14 percent were Tutsi, and 1 percent were Batwa (Twa). However, Hutus and Tutsis were not clearly distinct groups, since the two have intermarried for generations. The 1994 mass killings and migrations probably affected the ethnic composition of the population, but the extent and nature of the changes were unknown.

With the removal of ethnic labels from identification cards, the Batwa no longer were designated officially as an ethnic group. Less than 1 percent of the population is considered Batwa. The Batwa, survivors of the Twa (pygmy) tribes of the mountainous forest areas bordering the DRC, exist on the margins of society and continued to be treated as inferior citizens by both the Hutu and Tutsi groups. There were seven Batwa organizations focused on the protection of their interests, access to land, housing, education, and eradication of discrimination against them; however, they generally were unable to protect their interests. Few Batwa have been educated formally, resulting in minimal representation in government institutions. There was one Batwa on the NCHR.

Large-scale interethnic violence in the country between Hutus and Tutsis has erupted on three occasions since independence in 1962, resulting on each occasion in tens or hundreds of thousands of deaths. The most recent and severe outbreak of such violence, in 1994, involved genocidal killing of much of the Tutsi population under the direction of a Hutu-dominated government and in large part implemented by Hutu-dominated armed forces called the ex-FAR and Interahamwe militia. That genocide ended later the same year when a predominately Tutsi militia, operating out of Uganda and occupied Rwandan territory, overthrew that government and established the current Government. Since 1994 the Government has called for national reconciliation and committed itself to abolishing policies of the former government that had created and deepened ethnic cleavages. It eliminated references to ethnic origin from the national identity card. On February 1, a law prohibiting racial and ethnic discrimination came into effect. The Government has not addressed statutorily the problem of ethnic quotas in education, training, and government employment, but discrimination against the Tutsi minority in these areas effectively ceased with the change of government in 1994. Some organizations and individuals accused the Government of favoring Tutsis, particularly English-speaking Tutsis, in government employment, admission to professional schooling, recruitment into or promotion within the army, and other matters, a charge the Government denied.

#### Section 6 Worker Rights

##### a. The Right of Association

The Constitution provides the right to create professional associations and labor unions, and the Government generally respected this right in practice. The labor movement was hampered in practice because of the massive disruptions caused by the 1994 genocide. Unions continued to regroup and assert themselves.

Union membership was voluntary and open to all salaried workers, including public sector employees. Organized labor represented only a small part of the work force. More than 90 percent of workers were engaged in small scale subsistence farming. Approximately 7 percent of the workforce worked in the modern (wage) sector, and approximately 75 percent of those active in the modern sector were union members.

There were no restrictions on the right of association, but all unions must register with the Ministry of Justice for official recognition. There were no known cases in which the Government has denied recognition. The law prohibits unions from having political affiliations, but in practice this was not always respected. Participation in unauthorized demonstrations could result in employee dismissal, nonpayment of wages, and civil action against the union; however, authorization was not required for union meetings.

There were 27 registered unions under 2 umbrella groups: 17 were under the Central Union of Rwandan Workers (CESTRAR), and 10 were under the National Council of Free Unions in Rwanda (COSYLI).

The law prohibits antiunion discrimination, but no formal mechanisms existed to resolve complaints involving discrimination against unions. Union activists have complained that some employers threatened to fire employees who attempted to join a union.

Labor organizations may affiliate with international labor bodies. The CESTRAR was affiliated with the Organization of Africa Trade Union Unity and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions.

#### b. The Right to Organize and Bargain Collectively

The law protects workers from employer interference in their right to organize and administer unions; however, the law does not include agricultural workers in this provision. The Constitution provides for collective bargaining, although only the CESTRAR has an established collective bargaining agreement with the Government. In practice the Government was involved intimately in the collective bargaining process since most union members were in the public sector (see Section 6.e.).

The Constitution provides for the right to strike, except for public service workers and workers in essential services. A union's executive committee must approve any strike, and the union must first try to resolve its differences with management according to steps prescribed by the Ministry of Public Service and Labor. There were no demonstrations by union members during the year.

There were no export processing zones.

#### c. Prohibition of Forced or Bonded Labor

The law prohibits forced or bonded labor; however, prisoners were assigned to work details, which generally involve rebuilding houses, clearing land, or other public maintenance duties. Prisoners also may be hired out to perform work at private residences and businesses. It was unclear how much pay the prisoners were given in return for their work.

There continued to be reports that the Rwandan army forced Rwandan prisoners and Congolese civilians, including children, to mine coltan in the Provinces of South Kivu and Maniema, especially in the areas of Kalemie and Kalima.

The law does not prohibit specifically forced and bonded labor by children; however, there were no reports that such practices occurred.

#### d. Status of Child Labor Practices and Minimum Age for Employment

Except for subsistence agriculture, which occupies approximately 90 percent of the workforce, the law prohibits children under the age of 18 from working without their parents' or guardians' permission, and they generally cannot work at night. The minimum age for full-time employment was 18 years, and 14 years for apprenticeships, provided that the child has completed primary school. The Ministry of Public Service and Labor and the Ministry of Local Government did not enforce child labor laws effectively, in part due to the large number of households headed by children. It was rare to see child labor outside the agricultural sector.

#### e. Acceptable Conditions of Work

The Ministry of Public Service and Labor set minimum wages in the small modern sector. The Government, the main employer, effectively set most other wage rates as well. There is no single minimum wage; minimum wages varied according to the nature of the job. The minimum wages paid were insufficient to meet the basic needs of a worker and family, and in practice, workers accepted less than the minimum wage. Often families supplemented

their incomes by working in small business or subsistence agriculture.

Officially, government offices and private sector entities have a 40-hour workweek; the maximum workweek was 45 hours. There was no mandated rest period. The law controls hours of work and occupational health and safety standards in the modern wage sector, but inspectors from the Ministry of Public Service did not enforce these standards aggressively. Workers do not have the right to remove themselves from dangerous work situations without jeopardizing their jobs.

The law provides for equal protection of foreign workers.

f. Trafficking in Persons

The law does not prohibit trafficking in persons, and there were reports of trafficking in persons. Women reportedly were trafficked from Rwanda to South Africa during the year.

There were reports that the Rwandan army continued to force prisoners and civilians to mine coltan in the DRC (see Section 6.c.).

There continued to be reports that RDF troops abducted women and children from villages they raided to perform labor, military services, and sexual services (see Section 1.b.).